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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
12 November 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Developments in Countries on the Counter-insurgency List

1. South Vietnam

a. Viet Cong activity increased in early November, picking up noticeably in recent days. The number of attacks in the reporting week ending 4 November was 165--the highest weekly rate for 1963 and 28 above the earlier weekly high in mid-September. Most actions have been small-scale and have been repulsed by government forces with relatively low casualties.

b. The increased Viet Cong activity almost certainly is an effort to exploit dislocations resulting from the coup d'etat, but reflects also the Viet Cong gearing up for the standard autumn offensive, of which harbingers appeared in late August and early September. Viet Cong propaganda has also attempted to exploit the coup, claiming in some rural areas that the Communists have taken over in Saigon.

c. Government troops diverted to Saigon for the coup were largely reserve units except for troops immediately north of Saigon, and have generally returned to normal duty stations. Operational activity has been resumed by the government, but the military takeover has as yet had little clear effect on the conduct of the counterinsurgency effort.

d. The military rulers appear in firm control in Saigon and other cities. Urban popular opinion so far continues favorable, but some traditional opposition elements are viewing the military government's prospects with reserve. (Map)

2. Laos

a. Fighting has stepped up sharply in the Plaine des Jarres region. Neutralist and right-wing

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forces late last week opened a limited offensive against Pathet Lao and dissident neutralist positions to the north and east of the Plaine. Some initial successes have been reported, but there are signs of a developing counteraction by the Communist forces. Clashes also continue to be reported in the Vang Vieng and Nhommarath regions.

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4. Venezuela

a. There have been 21 acts of terrorism so far this month. These include an attack on a hospital in Barquismeto, about 170 miles west of Caracas, which resulted in the freeing of a Communist congressman and the killing of at least two policemen.

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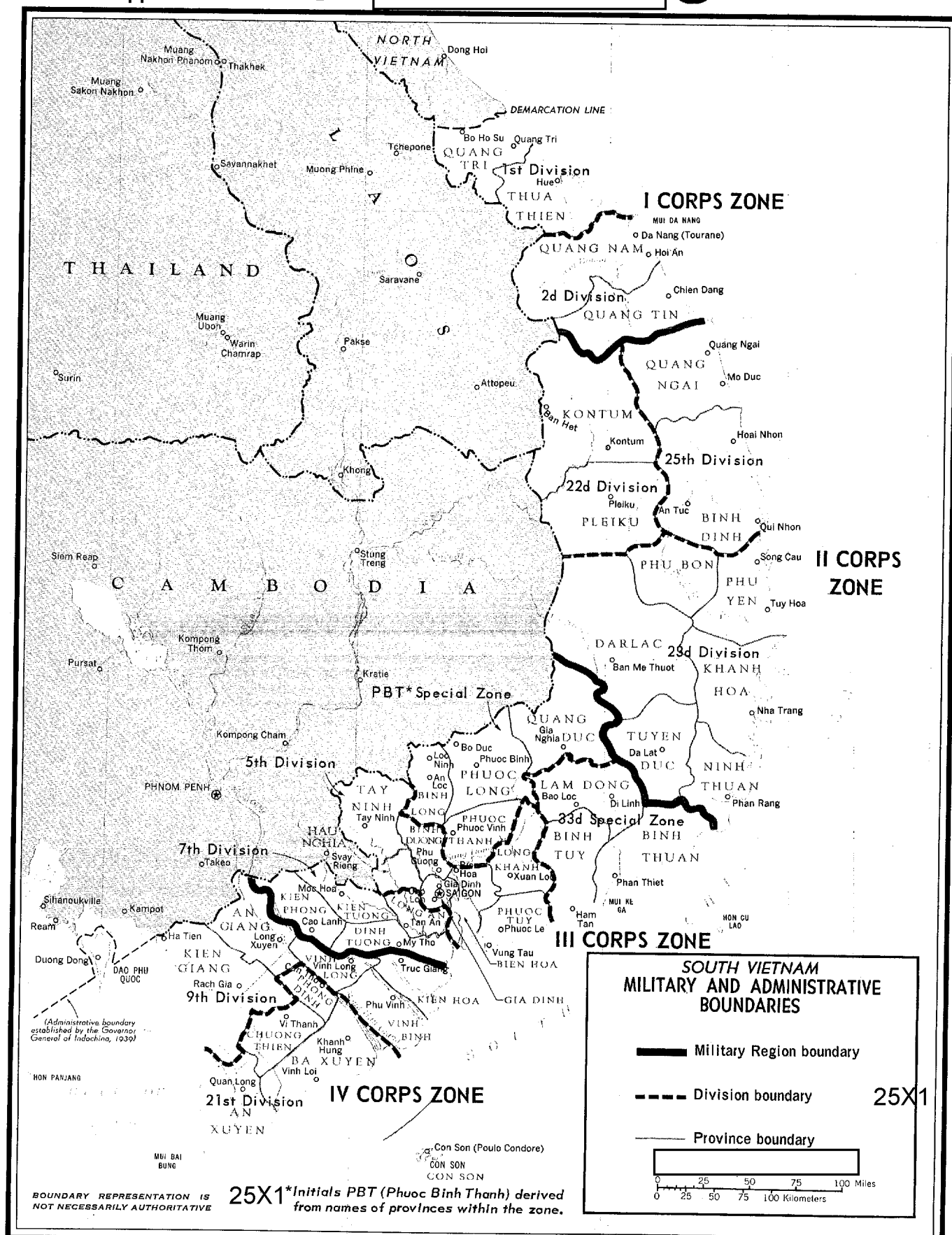
d. Security forces last week discovered three tons of arms and ammunition buried on a beach in northwest Venezuela. The present opinion of the Venezuelan Government is that these arms were smuggled in from Cuba for the FALN. Venezuelan officials are thinking of placing the arms before various international organizations as evidence of Cuban subversion.

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